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## DISCUSSION

C. O. RUGGLES, Ohio State University: In the discussion of Amherst's program four questions may be raised: first, aims; second, character of courses; third, method of instruction; and fourth, relation of undergraduate courses to secondary curricula. The aims call for no debate. Time will not permit adequate discussion of the second and third points, though it may be said that the courses appear to be too much on the order of a survey. Some move in this direction is wholesome, for there is a tendency in some institutions to emphasize certain problems, even in the fundamental course in the principles, at the expense of a more general course. This is undesirable, as was pointed out by Professors Ely, Kinley, and others at a previous conference on the teaching of economics.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, also, our so-called advanced courses often deal with but a small portion of a special field, and some of them are practically closed to the student who does not expect to specialize in economics by the large number of prerequisites. Professor MacDonald of Brown University, in a paper on "The Interest of the Public in the College Curriculum," has protested against the multiplication of prerequisites in a college course as follows: "And why should the young woman who aspires to some intelligent understanding of the elements of public hygiene or sanitation find the door of knowledge closed to her unless she has taken at least a full year's work in biology and passed a satisfactory examination in dissecting a cat?"<sup>2</sup> The provision for prerequisites at Northwestern as presented in Professor Deibler's paper is typical of what is found in most universities and indicates the need of more serious consideration of the whole subject of the sequence of courses.<sup>3</sup> But it may be questioned whether Amherst, in her zeal to provide some general citizenship courses, has not gone too far in the other direction. The courses as outlined cover so much ground and include so many problems of the first magnitude that it is doubtful whether satisfactory results can be attained, especially in view of the fact that both lectures and textbooks are to be eliminated.

The introductory course as here outlined raises the whole question of what ought to be the relation between the college course and that of secondary schools. The outline properly provides a Freshman course. It would be interesting to know the extent of the present tendency to offer economics to Freshmen in colleges and universities. Examination of statistics compiled by Professor Marshall and others in 1911 reveals the fact that of the colleges reporting, although about 14 per cent admitted students to economics in the

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Political Economy*, XVIII, 437-43.

<sup>2</sup> Paper read before a meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, at Harvard University, October 14, 1910; Printed in *Educational Review*, XLI, 60-70.

<sup>3</sup> On sequence in courses, see article by Professor Marshall, *Journal of Political Economy*, XXI, 18-33.

Freshman year, over 42 per cent did not admit students to economics until the Junior year; nearly 13 per cent not until the Senior year.<sup>1</sup> The Amherst outline states on p. 3 that economics occupies a unique position among Freshman courses because "the traditional subjects in language and science fail to arouse the student's deepest interests, for in subject-matter and method they are a continuation of high-school subjects." Is this sound pedagogy? Is not this unique position of economics a weakness? Has there not been too little foundation in secondary education for the study of the social sciences? Have not economists slighted their science by building too much at the top and too little at the bottom, and have they not at this point a lesson to learn from the scientists?<sup>2</sup> Would there not be more reason for admitting Freshmen to economics at Amherst and elsewhere if they had had some economics in their secondary course? Could not the aims of the Amherst curriculum be more fully realized if the program of the specialist in the social sciences was more generally understood and appreciated? Have not economists overlooked an important element in value in this connection? It would appear that Professor Clark<sup>3</sup> of Columbia emphasizes something fundamental when he maintains that it is necessary in the United States to give much attention to the study of economics below the college, in view of the increasing number of persons who "dabble" in applied economics, either in office or in the voting-booth.

Professor Deibler says in his paper that he is "convinced that courses in economics when properly handled are just as effective in developing the powers of thought and logical processes as are mathematics or the sciences." Economists often make such claims for economics, especially when they are defending it as a cultural study. Yet the statistics already given indicate that economics requires too much power of thought to be introduced into the early years of college education, to say nothing of its introduction into secondary courses. This situation is not easy to understand in view of the fact that many authorities believe that the social sciences should form a part of elementary and secondary education.

President Vincent has urged that just as nature-study in the grades later develops into the "ologies" in college, so should the social sciences be constantly drawn upon in elementary work, to be followed by a substantial course in high school.<sup>4</sup> Professor J. B. Clark maintains that much economic theory which has been considered difficult can be successfully taught to children ten years of age, and he contends that in the United States, where verdicts are given by a jury of voters, it is not an advantage to have the jurors ignorant

<sup>1</sup>*Journal of Political Economy*, XIX, 760-89.

<sup>2</sup>See F. Hodson, *Broad Lines in Science Teaching*, chap. ii, by A. Kahn on "Economic Science in Secondary Schools."

<sup>3</sup>*Journal of Political Economy*, XVII.

<sup>4</sup>*Proceedings of the National Education Association*, 1901, pp. 124-31.

of the case.<sup>1</sup> Professor Laughlin has said that "the work of research however brilliant is in a way of no greater importance to the good of our nation than that elementary teaching of economics to the great masses who never enter college but who form a majority of those who enter the voting-booth."<sup>2</sup> The National Education Association Committee on the Articulation of High School and College said in 1913 that it is probable "that the high-school teachers of social studies have the best opportunity ever offered to any social group to improve the citizenship of the land,"<sup>3</sup> Professors Taussig, Bullock, Ely, Commons, and others are also on record as favoring the teaching of economics in secondary schools.<sup>4</sup> The famous Committee of Ten of the National Education Association, although it did not advocate economics as a separate study, distinctly said that its fundamental principles were not beyond the grasp of the secondary pupil.<sup>5</sup> The Committee of Five of the Department of Business Education of the National Education Association in its model program included economics.<sup>6</sup>

It is probable that a college situated as Amherst is will not consider it necessary to make connections with secondary education. But the colleges and state universities of the Middle and Far West are already face to face with the problem. The very recent development of six years of work in the high schools is giving a new meaning to the relation between the undergraduate course in the college and the courses in the secondary schools. A group of educational experts (Committee on Economy of Time, National Education Association), appointed in 1908 and reporting in 1912, went on record as opposed to the upward extension of the high school, but those engaged in secondary education have not taken the report of this committee seriously.<sup>7</sup> They have

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Political Economy*, June, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the National Education Association*, 1901, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Haynes, *Economics in the Secondary School*, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Taussig, "The Problem of Secondary Education as regards Training for Citizenship," *Educational Review*, XVII, 431-39; Ely, "Economics in Secondary Education," *ibid*, XX, 152-58; Bullock, "Political Economy in the Secondary School," *Education*, XI, 539-47. See also John Haynes, *Economics in the Secondary Schools* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), chap. ii; this book contains some bibliography; A. L. Manchester, "The High-School Course in Economics," *Journal of Political Economy*, XIX, 750-59; F. R. Clow, "Economics as a School Study," *American Economic Association, Economic Studies*, III, No. I; G. Gunton, "Economics in the Public Schools," *Proceedings of the National Education Association*, 1901, pp. 131-37; George E. Vincent, "Social Science and the Curriculum," *Proceedings of the National Education Association*, 1901, pp. 124-31; Daggett, "Method and Scope of High-School Economics," *History Teacher's Magazine*, III, 172-76; H. P. Swett, "Economics Education in the Secondary School," *Education*, XXX, 416-20.

<sup>5</sup> Haynes, *Economics in the Secondary Schools*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> Address of Superintendent R. A. Kent, Lawrence, Kansas, delivered at the University of Illinois, August, 1916.

met the demands of secondary education, as is seen in the recent rapid development of junior colleges. The problem, therefore, that Amherst and other eastern colleges may be able to ignore is pressing urgently for solution in other parts of the United States, and it appears that what economists and others engaged in higher education have neglected to do is likely to be forced upon them by the demands of secondary education itself. However, the solution of the many knotty problems<sup>1</sup> in all this development and the proper adjustment of curricula will demand the best talent and the broad-minded co-operation of all concerned.

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FRANK T. CARLTON, Albion College: The Amherst program exhibits certain marked differences from the method more modestly followed at Albion. It is quite evident that Mr. Hamilton's angle of vision does not coincide with mine. I am inclined to look with suspicion upon such a formidable program. Can it be, is it, carried out? Or is it merely for purposes of exhibition—like the contents of some college catalogues? The Amherst program seems to offer a type of "leisure-class" education. But no Albion student looks forward to a life of ease or of leisurely contemplation of art, literature, or philosophy. Albion, a Middle-west college, aims to prepare her students for the active duties of life—in short, to earn a living; and also to give to each student an ambition to have some active part in movements which make for social uplift and betterment in a modern democratic nation. In Albion we do not place much stress upon the sort of training which emphasizes culture for culture's sake, art for art's sake, or mathematics for the sake of mental discipline only.

I hold, with others, that it is not possible to educate—truly educate—without reference to some special calling. Education must ever touch solid ground. In my judgment, every young man ought to decide upon his life-work while in college, if not before. Of course, he may change his plan during college life or after. But in order that he may do efficient work, some fairly definite plan ought to be formulated. In harmony with this point of view, in Albion a faculty committee on vocational guidance has been organized. Albion has also arranged with the University of Michigan combined literary and professional courses in law, medicine, and engineering. Students enrolling in these courses remain in Albion three years and are then transferred to the professional schools of the University. Those successfully completing the prescribed courses receive the A.B. degree from Albion and the professional degree from the University. The Albion plan, while recognizing that the college is not a professional school, is based upon the conception that the work of the college should offer a definite foundation for professional and business training.

<sup>1</sup>Dangers in the junior-college movement were pointed out by Dean Angell of the University of Chicago in a paper before the North Central Association of Colleges in 1915.

E. G. NOURSE, University of Arkansas: With the spirit of the Amherst plan of bringing the student to see at the beginning the involved setting in which economic activities go forward and how we may look to economic science for some part of the solution of the social problems thus raised, I am in entire sympathy. I believe it is time we realize that there is nothing sacred about the line of approach to economic study as laid down in our so-called elementary texts, and that we should set about reorganizing our beginning courses along broader and more helpful lines. However, I do not find my students sufficiently familiar with the concrete facts of economical life to make much, at the start, out of any large generalizations about the institutional foundations of our society and the abstractions of theoretical socio-dynamics, such as pecuniary motivation, no matter how simply it may be phrased. Nor are they any more able at that stage of development to work out or even to grasp a thumb-nail theory of economic forces and their functioning (such as the foundation course in principles under the Northwestern plan and so general, elsewhere), which will be of much service to them either in later courses in economics or afterward in contact with the realities of life.

I find I get a better balance between scientific law, philosophic interpretation, and concrete experience by a more leisurely but more complete examination of a narrower range of economic problems carefully chosen for their fundamental importance and typical significance. When we take up the discussion of natural resources, human participation in the economic process, or the rôle of capital, is it not best to follow the subject connectedly and somewhat intensively through an analysis of its technological aspects, its value results, and its share in distribution as mediated by existing institutions? Suppose, for example, that we elect to treat in our first year only two general topics—natural resources and their control; and labor, its employment and reward. The first half-course takes up a discussion of the part played by nature's resources in man's efforts to live well upon the earth, the relative scarcity or abundance of these resources, and thus their value under an existing technique. This raises the question of private-property rights in land and their bearing, on the one hand, upon the efficient utilization of resources and, on the other, the private incomes to which these property rights give rise. We move from the student's everyday experience through an examination of a techno-economic process to the study of a typical case of value and thence to discussion of the serviceability of specific economic institutions as a means of administering such limited resources. We emerge naturally upon a plane of intelligent criticism and evaluation of our system of landed property. Other topics are treated similarly in later courses.

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FRANK U. QUILLIN, Knox College: While there is much to admire in the Amherst course of study, each institution needs to work out the course adapted to its needs. I have worked upon this idea in bringing about a radical change

in the economics department of Knox College. When I began my work there four years ago I found eleven separate courses listed for the one instructor, with no sequence and nearly all of them one-semester courses. Last year and this year there have been three courses in economics, each of them being a full year's course, and no student has been allowed to enter the second without having taken the first, nor to enter the third without having taken the second. I have had some reason for believing that the change has met with approval from those most vitally concerned—the students. With all courses in the department on an elective basis, the enrolment two years ago was 120. Last year, with the revised curriculum in effect, it fell off to 92, and this year it is 159, an increase of 70 per cent. The scholarship standing of the students is also better.

The first year's work is a three-hour course in the principles, using Taussig's two volumes as a basis. In the second year a five-hour course is given. This course is labeled, happily or unhappily, "phases of business." It includes the four customary one-semester courses of three hours each, money and banking, business organization, monopolies and trusts, and labor problems.

I have found it quite possible to run these four courses into one, to show the relationship obtaining between them, and to have the students see the unity. I am absolutely convinced that the students get more out of the ten hours of consecutive work than they used to get out of the twelve hours of separate semester courses.

The third year's work is a two-hour course in accounting and corporation finance.

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CHARLES L. STEWART, University of Illinois: While it would be impossible for many of our large institutions to adopt the Amherst program in detail, there is much in the object and spirit of that program to which their authorities can afford to give attention.

The course in elementary economics is ordinarily one in which the number of sections is large. At the University of Illinois this year we have four sections meeting at each of the four morning hours four times a week. On Fridays the four sections meeting at each hour are brought together, not to hear lectures, but to take part in special discussion of the assignments of the preceding days. To enable the leaders of Friday discussions to be properly informed, the quiz instructors fill out blanks on Thursday indicating (1) the subjects emphasized, those treated slightly, and those omitted; (2) the subjects offering the greatest difficulties in teaching, and the names of students with very good and with very poor records; and (3) other matters concerning which the quiz instructors have remarks to offer. While the results of the new method are not yet to be finally evaluated, it is safe to say that the Friday discussions require strong leadership. The leader has to be careful about raising topics or points of view not treated previously in the assigned work,

lest, in his effort to get the students to unfold the new matter, time be lost and thought confused. New principles can usually be elucidated best, especially in a large group of students, when set forth in organized lecture form. The Friday discussion does much to unify the work of sections employing it, provided allowance be made for its limitations.

The department dinner occurs on the first Monday of the month and affords opportunity for interchange of opinion on the work in the various courses. No less important is the purely voluntary teaching club. Either of these organizations, and especially the latter, is in a position to get help from the members of the staff in education under most advantageous conditions. The staff members in education are usually glad to attend meetings of this nature. It is especially desirable to invite members of the education staff to attend sessions of classes in economics and then to report criticisms to the individual instructors and to the group.

Desire for unity among sections and courses need not lead to stereotyped teaching or even to extremely philosophical arrangements of courses. Through all the specialization and disproportionate emphasis that often marks its influence, we must develop unity in the spirit and, within limits, in the method of teaching.

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A. E. SUFFERN, Beloit College: It is a hopeful sign when the departments of colleges and universities begin to show a greater willingness properly to subordinate and co-ordinate their work for the sake of general institutional efficiency. The college has been slow to respond to the demand for adjustments of the curriculum which will really meet the needs of the students. The extent to which arrangements may emphasize the cultural to the exclusion of the vocational must vary somewhat with the nature of the demands made upon the college by its patrons and with the conditions which the students have to meet in life. In general, those who wish to specialize and prepare early for a vocation should attend a university, but those who wish to emphasize primarily the cultural training and who prefer the environment of the college may also desire sufficient adaptation of the college curriculum to give more definite preparation for the vocations upon which they shall enter. Courses in accounting, business organization, commerce, and money and banking may meet this need without too great emphasis upon specialization or too great detraction from the cultural work.

However, the college should place its chief emphasis upon proper correlation and synthesis from the Freshman to the Senior year. This is a difficult process under a system of elections and where poor co-operation exists between departments. Where the college has to serve a student body with varied needs and fairly definite vocational prospects (as contrasted with a college whose students wish only a cultural training), probably the best results can be obtained through arranging courses in sequence. Before students are



allowed to take work in a department they should be compelled to take this arrangement into consideration when making their elections. This will permit better synthesis of material than ordinarily results when several isolated advanced courses are offered.

Not only should the studies in the Freshman year furnish more interesting material from the humanistic sciences, but definite instruction in *how* to work should be given. College students in the Sophomore year certainly give evidence of the need of such work as a preparation for the beginning course in economics. Intellectual habits attained by the students in the high school and first year in college place the teacher of economics under the necessity of constant study of methods which will break up the old habits, encourage thinking, and require emphasis upon scholarship. An organized course in the Freshman year which will teach the students *how* to work as well as supplement the more interesting material offered from the humanistic sciences will lay a basis for the development of serious-mindedness and interest in scholarship which is very much needed in the college.

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GEORGE E. PUTNAM, University of Kansas: I have only one suggestion to add to the discussion, and it is concerned more with the matter of educational policy in general than with the teaching of economics. There is something radically wrong with the present system of undergraduate training when it frankly encourages a student to study his instructor rather than his major subject. Under the system of free electives and final semester examinations, he is not obliged to hold in mind the contents of a course after he has been given credit for its completion. While he may assimilate a vast amount of general information in his pursuit of the popular courses, his training in one particular field of study is, at best, superficial. Certainly this kind of undergraduate training is not conducive to the best type of scholarship. Therefore, why not supplement the present system and require Seniors to be examined in their entire major course by the faculty of the department in which they have majored? On the basis of this examination (preferably a written examination) major students might be ranked by the department as "first class," "second class," or "third class" in economics, history, or whatever major they may have chosen. The adoption of such a policy would furnish the student with a new incentive. He would be obliged to devote himself more seriously to the study of his major subject, and less seriously to the study of human nature. Finally, the examination of major students by the department as a whole would involve no radical reorganization of the present administrative machinery. It appears to me that this simple reform in the modern university system is of even greater importance than a reform in curricula or methods of instruction.